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ABSTRACT

The booklet contains a story for middle-grade students which shows how the roles of men and women change through the years. The main characters are three sixth graders in Hawaii: one girl has Hawaiian ancestors, one girl has Japanese ancestors, and one boy has New England missionary ancestors. The children discover a magic stalk of sugar cane which enables them to visit the past or future when they chew on it. As each one visits the past, the story reveals sex-role expectations of boys, girls, men, and women during the periods of ancient Polynesian culture, white Christian missionaries, and Japanese immigrant laborers in Hawaii. After experiencing this, the children discuss how different their lives and their parents' lives are in the present. Then, they visit the future and see themselves as young adults. The two girls become scientific explorers in space and underwater; the boy becomes an agricultural engineer growing experimental crops on the islands to supply the mainland. The story can serve as a starting point for discussion about changing sex roles in any location. (AV)

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Sugar Cane Magic

by

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TO THE READER

I wrote this story to show how roles of women and men change through the years.

The magic sugar cane stalk is something I made up, just as I made up Meliana and the other characters. I have tried, however, to be as authentic as possible in showing how people lived in Hawaii during the time of the ancient Polynesians, in the early days of the **haole** missionaries, and in the first years of the Japanese immigrant laborers.

When Meliana and her friends talk about their mothers and fathers, it might remind you of your parents or those of some of your friends.

None of us knows what life will be like in the future. In the last part of the book I've given an example of how it might be. You may have other ideas of what men's and women's lives will be like when you grow up.

We do know that women's roles and men's roles have changed from the past to the present and that these roles will change even more in the future. After you've read **Sugar Cane Magic**, perhaps you'd like to discuss it with your teachers and classmates.

NANCY ALPERT MOWER

Honolulu, Hawaii
February, 1977

1

At first I didn't even tell anyone about the magic sugar cane. Not even Aiko and Brad, my best friends.

I was afraid they wouldn't believe me. You see, I like to make up games. If something really magic happens, they think I'm just pretending.

But magic is no fun if you can't share it. Brad, Aiko, and I have been each other's best friends practically forever, and I tell them everything. Aiko is short with straight black hair. Her great-grandparents came to Hawaii from Japan. Brad's a bean pole with curly blond hair. His ancestors were missionaries who came here from New England. I'm mostly Hawaiian with a little Chinese and Portuguese thrown in. The three of us met in kindergarten. We're in sixth grade now, and we still play together all the time.

We've had some exciting adventures over the years. But I found the magic sugar cane all by myself. It was the most thrilling discovery I'd ever made. So I couldn't keep it to myself for long.

It was a Saturday morning when I decided to tell them. We were pushing through my uncle's cane field, which is one of my favorite places. When the cane is thick and high, it's hard to walk in the field, but that's part of the fun. We could smell the sweetness as we edged our way between tall stalks.

"What's this magic you were talking about, Meliana?" Brad asked me as we sat down in a small clearing.

"What was it?" chimed in Aiko. "What game were you playing?"

Just as I feared. Aiko thought it was a new game. Probably Brad did, too.

"It's not a game," I told them. "Something strange happened to me last week. Here in

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this very spot." I leaned toward them and spoke softly. "There's a stalk of sugar cane in this field that has magic power!"

"Sure. Tell me about it." Aiko was skeptical. As she grinned at me her long hair fell forward over her shoulders.

I looked into her dark eyes and said, "Wait till you chew on a piece of cane from that magic stalk. You'll see I'm not playing games. Sit here a minute while I get some."

I stood up and walked to my special stalk. Last week I tied a red scarf around the stalk so I'd be able to find it again. Taking a small knife from my pocket, and breathing the sweet cane smell, I cut off three pieces.

Sitting down in the cleared area, you can see nothing but waving cane and above it green mountains. The land here slopes gently down to the sea, and when you stand up, if you're tall enough, you can look beyond the cane in the lower field down to the white steeple of the church where Brad's father preaches.

Everybody expects Brad to be super good, since his father's a minister. But that's where they're wrong. I don't mean that he's bad. It's just that he likes to play games and have fun. Like I do. And he loves the land. He's always planting new seeds in the garden behind his church. Brad says there's something magic about growing things.

I knew I could convince Brad that the sugar cane was magic. The problem would be Aiko.

Aiko has no use for magic. She says there are enough strange things in the real world, like the fish in the ocean. Looking way off in the distance, beyond the church, I could see the blue Pacific where Aiko sometimes snorkels. She knows all kinds of interesting facts about fish and sea shells. Life under the water is interesting, but I think the real action is in outer space. When I grow up I want to fly in a space ship. That would be even more exciting than my magic sugar cane.

I took the three pieces I had cut and ran the short distance back to my friends. Even then, for a minute, I wasn't sure I should tell them.

But Brad kept asking. He's like that. "Come on, Meliana. Tell. What happened last Saturday?"

Brad loves adventure. His eyes sparkled as he talked, and the bright sunlight made his hair look like strands of gold thread.

I began, "Strangest thing that ever happened to me. I hardly believed it myself. I was sitting right here, chewing on a piece of cane and thinking about what this field must have looked like in the days of old Hawaii. As I sat here thinking about it, the cane field disappeared. Just like that! It sort of melted into the air, and I was standing in an ancient Hawaiian village.

"Actually I was working with a group of women who were beating **kapa**. I wasn't even wearing my shorts and T-shirt. A piece of brown and white kapa was wrapped around me, and that's all I had on."

"Did the women see you?" Brad asked.

"Yes, that was the strangest part of all. They talked to me just as though I belonged there. They knew my name, and I seemed to know who they were. I know they spoke Hawaiian. Now that's weird because I only know a little Hawaiian. Yet I had no trouble understanding them. I spoke English, but they understood me."

"Whew!" Brad let out a long whistle. "Were you scared?"

"A little. But I was mostly curious."

"How long were you there?"

"I don't know. I kind of lost track of time. It seemed like hours, but I think it was really only a few minutes."

Brad slapped his thigh with his right hand. "Righteous! What an adventure, Meliana. How did you get back to the present?"

"It just happened. After I had been beating kapa for awhile the whole scene faded away, and I was sitting right here in the cane field. Good thing, because my arm was getting kind of tired from all that kapa beating."

All this time Aiko hadn't said a word. Now she gave that "grown-up look," the one she sometimes uses when she thinks I'm just too silly. "O.K., Meliana, it sounds like a good game. I'll play it with you, but stop pretending that you really went back in time."

"Aiko, she really did," Brad said. "Otherwise why would her arm have been tired from beating?"

"It was still sore when I went to bed that night," I added.

"Anyone can pretend to beat kapa. We learned how in fourth grade, when we were studying Hawaii, remember?" As Aiko spoke she moved her sugar cane in a brisk beating-type motion.

"Meliana wasn't pretending," said Brad. Then he added, "I think we should try it again. If we chewed on our own pieces of cane, I wonder if we'll end up in the same time and place?"

"I'll end up right here, playing games with you two crazies," Aiko said. "But that's O.K. Let's play."

I ignored her. "While we chew we must concentrate super-hard—all on the same thing," I said looking at Brad. "Otherwise it might not work."

I thought to myself that it might not work for Aiko anyway. Sometimes magic won't come to people who don't believe.

Aiko had closed her eyes and was wrinkling her forehead. She looked like she was studying hard.

"Don't close your eyes," I said. "We should all look at the field. Think about old Hawaii and how this land looked before it was a cane field. All together now."

We all put our cane in our mouths.

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2

As I tasted the sugary sweetness I thought about a picture I had seen of Hawaiian women beating kapa. They sat in a sort of lean-to, which was thatched with dried **lauhala** leaves. Thin strips of **wauke** bark were spread over large logs. The women were all dressed in kapa. There were no men in the picture. A small boy played with a dog outside the kapa house. A rooster strutted nearby.

The crowing of a rooster interrupted my thoughts. I turned toward the sound. As I moved, the sugar cane began to melt away. The thick stalks were shriveling up, withering, shrinking into nothingness. Slowly the cane disappeared.

I looked down to the lower field. The same thing was happening there. The pointed church steeple wasn't there at all. In its place stood a long, narrow Hawaiian house. It looked like pictures I had seen of **hālau wa'a**, the houses where Hawaiians built canoes.

"Look what happened to your church," I said to Brad.

There was no answer.

I turned my head to look at Brad. He wasn't there. Neither was Aiko. Where they had been sitting there were logs, each one covered with a thin strip of kapa. An elderly woman was chanting, while two younger women beat designs into the kapa.

"Get back to work, Meliana," one of the women said to me. "You're daydreaming again. Go and work with Kapua."

I looked at the stick I was holding in my hand. It was not a piece of sugar cane. It was a kapa beater. I stood beside the tall woman. Kapua's thick black hair was cut short, which told me she must be married. She beat firmly to the rhythm of the chant. I moved my forearm up and down, trying to match her motions. My arm felt tired, as though I'd been doing this for a long time.

"When the canoe is launched, we'll have lovely kapa," Kapua said to me. "Enough for everyone in the family to wear."

"When will it be launched?" I asked.

"Soon. They are doing the sacred lashing now. It is the season of **Kaulua** already. **Nana** will be here soon, with its clear skies, and the canoe must be ready to sail."

I continued to beat, but my eyes kept wandering toward the hālau. I longed to see the new canoe.

"Meliana, look what you've done! Why don't you watch your work?"

The other woman was speaking to me. I looked down at my kapa. I had torn it. That's what I get for not concentrating.

Kapua put a hand on my shoulder. "Don't worry. We'll do another one."

"The child is tired," Kapua said to the other woman. "She's been beating all morning. Why don't you let her take a rest?"

"All right," the other woman said. "Run and play for awhile, Meliana."

I set my kapa beater on the ground and ran toward the hālau. I must see that new canoe. I sped past the sleeping house and past the women's eating house. On and on I dashed toward the sea in the direction of the hālau wa'a.

"Stop! How dare you come near?"

At the gruff sound I broke my pace. I slowed to a walk and looked up. A tall dark-skinned man was standing right in front of me. His hands were by his side. His thick lips looked cross. His eyebrows were thick and bushy over angry eyes.

He spoke again. "You know better than to approach the hālau wa'a during the time of the sacred lashing."

I bent my head toward the ground. "I'm sorry," I told him. "I forgot."

"Meliana, surely you can't forget the **kapu**. No one can look at the lashing before it is finished. Especially not a female."

"I'm sorry," I said again. I shuffled back toward the eating houses. The smell of roast **kūmū** drifted from a fire in front of the men's eating house. I moved near that delicious smell. A man I recognized as Kalani was tending the fire. Two other men were pounding poi in front of the house.

"That fish smells good," I said to Kalani. "Are we having it for lunch?"

Kalani was not smiling as he looked up at me. "Meliana, how can you ask that question? You know that it is kapu for women to eat kūmū."

"I forgot," I said. "It just smelled so good. What will the women eat?"

Kalani pointed to the other fire. There were some sweet potatoes wrapped in ti leaves. I'd rather have the kūmū.

I turned from the eating houses and walked back to the kapa beaters. Kapua was holding up a piece of finished kapa. "Not bad," she was saying. "Now we must spread it in the sun to dry."

"Why are so many things kapu for women?" I asked Kapua.

"What do you mean, Meliana?"

"Why can't we build canoes and eat kūmū? Why aren't we allowed to prepare our own food?"

"Cooking is men's work," Kapua said. "We each have our special jobs. Women plait lauhala. Men plant taro and provide food for us. Men cut down the wauke branches for our kapa, and we peel off the bark, soak it and beat it."

"But why can't we all eat the same things? And why do we have to eat in a separate house?"

Kapua looked shocked. "Meliana, how can you question the wisdom of the gods? We must not eat with the men. We would do harm to the food. Women and men each have our own work and our own way of life."

I didn't understand. What made us different from men, so different we couldn't even eat the same food? Women and girls were not allowed to eat pork, coconuts, **ulua**, kūmū, sea turtle, stingray, great white shark, or certain kinds of bananas. Women and men both cultivated sweet potatoes, yams, and gourds. But only men could plant taro.

We collected shellfish, sea urchins, crab and seaweed, but we could not fish on the reef or along the shore. That was for men. Women weren't allowed to dance the hula. And we certainly could never enter the sacred **heiau**.

I looked up toward the heiau. That temple seemed to sway in the wind. The two eating houses and the sleeping house were also bending and swaying. As I watched, the houses seemed to flow one into the other. Now they didn't look like houses. They looked like stalks of bamboo.

The bamboo was changing from brown to green. It was full and leafy. It did not smell like bamboo. It smelled like sugar cane. I looked out toward the hālau wa'a. All I could see was the tall white steeple of Brad's father's church. Brad and Aiko sat by my side in the clearing. We were surrounded by cane. I looked at my friends and didn't know what to say.

Aiko was first to speak. "You were right, Meliana. It is magic. That was not a game. You were really in an ancient Hawaiian village."

"Good for you, Meliana, asking all those questions," Brad said. He's always asking questions in school.

"Where were you?" I asked. "I didn't see either of you."

"No one could see us," Brad said. "I guess it's because Aiko and I don't belong in

ancient Hawaii. But we could see you, and we could hear everything you said, even when you were down there near the canoe house."

"I wondered if Kapua would get mad at you for asking questions," Aiko said.

"No, she's kind," I replied. For some reason I felt close to Kapua.

"Kapua didn't seem to mind," Brad said, "but Kalani seemed pretty upset with you. Hey, all that food made me hungry. Let's go get some lunch."

We stood up and worked our way to the edge of the field.

"That's a righteous stalk you found," Brad said as we pushed through thick cane.

"I wonder if it would work for anyone else?" Aiko pondered.

"What do you mean?" I asked her.

"Like Brad. Or me. If we concentrate on our ancestors, I wonder what would happen."

"Aiko, you're a genius," Brad said. "My ancestors once lived in this same area. And so did yours. Let's think hard about them and see what happens. Want to try it after lunch?"

"Yes, but we'll do yours first," Aiko said.

That's like Aiko. She sometimes gets a good idea, but never wants to be the one to try it out.

Still it sounded O.K. to me. We could think hard about the missionaries who came to teach Christianity to Hawaiians. I wondered what kind of experience Brad would have.

3

We ate lunch at Aiko's. Her grandmother had made a large pot of steaming **saimin**. The noodles were slightly salty and tasted delicious.

We didn't tell Aiko's grandmother about the magic sugar cane. The three of us seemed to agree, without even discussing it, that this was our secret.

As soon as we were through eating we ran back to the cane field. I led Brad and Aiko to the stalk I had marked with the bright red scarf. I cut another piece of cane for each of us and we sat in the cleared spot on the ground.

"It's decided then?" I asked. "We're all going to concentrate on Brad's ancestors this time?"

"Yes," Aiko said. "Think about New England missionaries."

"Don't close your eyes," I reminded them, lifting my cane to my mouth.

I looked at Brad's blond hair. It matched the yellow shorts he was wearing. He had spilled saimin on his T-shirt, but things like that don't bother Brad. I thought of the haole missionaries. Our hot Hawaiian sun must have been hard on their fair skin. Especially since they insisted on wearing the same heavy clothes they had worn back in New England. In fact they made the Hawaiian women put on muumuus. The children of the missionaries had to wear long underwear in January, even though it was never winter.

A child in long underwear and wool clothers would certainly look out of place in this cane field. But the cane was withering. The tall stalks were slowly sinking into the ground. Brad certainly looked uncomfortable in his black pants and long sleeved white shirt. He grimaced. I wondered if his underwear itched. At least they hadn't forced the Hawaiians to wear long underwear under our muumuus. But even my flowered print muumuu was bothersome. I wanted to take it off and plunge into the ocean.

We were standing next to the white church. It was a hot sunny day. The surf rolled gently against the sandy beach. A small ship with white sails lay at anchor near the shore. Brad was looking at his garden.

Brad's vegetable garden grew a few feet back from the beach. He was stooping over it, peering at tiny sprouts which had just burst through the soil. "The beans are coming up, Meliana," he said. His voice sounded sad.

Why was he sad? He was usually thrilled as each new crop popped up in his garden. Maybe he was just too hot.

"I want to swim," I told him. "Do you think your father would let you come in the ocean with me?"

Brad shook his head. "I'm afraid not," he said. "I have to finish packing. I must leave soon." He stared at the white ship.

"Leave? Where are you going?"

Brad couldn't leave. He and I had been playing together for years, although he didn't have much time for play. When he was not helping his father with the chores, or tending his garden, he was reading the Bible and studying religion. "Where are you going?" I asked again.

Brad was still looking at the ship. "I must sail to New England," he told me.

"New England? Why Brad, why?"

"Father says I cannot get enough education here. I must go to proper schools, so I can get into divinity school at Yale College."

"Are you going to be a minister like your father?"

"Yes. That's what father wants me to do."

"But New England's so far away. It'll take you months to get there."

"I know. And I'll be gone for a long time."

"Where will you live?"

"I don't know. I hope some of my relatives will take care of me."

We were interrupted by a woman's voice. "Brad, you have chores to do. Oh, good morning, Meliana."

It was Brad's mother. She had come to stand beside us.

"Why does Brad have to go away?" I asked her.

"It's important for him to get a good education," she replied. Her voice sounded sad. She looked tired.

Brad's mother worked all the time. When she wasn't cleaning her small wooden house, or cooking, or sewing for her family, she was teaching Hawaiians. She had been teaching me how to read, and sew and cook.

"Do you want him to go?" I asked.

"What we want is not important, Meliana. It is God's will that our children go back to New England to complete their education. You know that Brad's older brother sailed last year."

"I had forgotten. Don't you miss him?"

"Of course I do. And I'll miss Brad. But we must not think about ourselves. Come inside now, and we can have a reading lesson. The other Hawaiian children are there already. Brad, you'd better find your father and finish your chores."

I blinked back tears as I turned away from Brad. When would I see him again?

Inside the house I sat with other children on a straight wooden bench. I looked at Brad's mother in her long white dress. A row of buttons ran from the neck to the pulled in waist. There was another row of buttons running down the long sleeves.

She handed me a Bible, saying, "Meliana, will you begin? Please start with the Gospel of St. Luke, second chapter."

The words on the printed page seemed to dance before my eyes. I could not make them out. I know that I have read them before. But today they kept jumping around. I held the Bible up toward the light. I stared hard at the black marks on the page. They waved and whirled and changed from black to green. Then they grew taller. The Bible disappeared. So did the bench and the other children. The words had turned to sugar cane tassels. I looked for Brad's mother. She was not around. Aiko was sitting beside me chewing on her cane.

"Aiko, I miss Brad," I said.

Aiko took the cane from her mouth. "He'll be right back," she said.

"No, he won't. He won't be back for years."

"He just went to cut some more cane off the magic stalk. See, there he comes."

Brad was wearing his shorts and T-shirt. "What happened to your white shirt?" I asked him. "Where are your long pants?"

"The magic wore off," he said. "Am I glad. I didn't want to go to New England. And that wool underwear really itched."

"Aiko, where were you?" I asked. "I didn't see you there at all."

"It was just like before," Aiko explained. "I could see both of you, but you couldn't see me."

"That's weird," Brad said. "But I guess it makes sense, because Aiko's ancestors

weren't in Hawaii during the early days of the missionaries."

"But, Aiko, your great-grandparents did live here," I said.

"I know," she said. "In fact they worked in this very cane field. But that was later."

"Let's see if we can get back to that time," I suggested. "Let's all concentrate on your great-grandparents and see what happens."

Aiko shook her head. "It's not necessary," she said. "I know what life was like in those days. My grandmother has told me."

Isn't that like Aiko to chicken out, I thought. Still, she really did believe in the magic. Maybe, with time, Brad and I could talk her into it.

4

That Aiko can be stubborn.

All week I tried to talk her into using the magic sugar cane with her own ancestors. She kept saying, "No need."

"When I was little, grandmother told me stories of life in Hawaii when she was a little girl. Her mother, that's my great-grandmother, came to Hawaii when she was seventeen years old," Aiko told us.

I pleaded with her, "If we use the magic sugar cane, we can go back and see for ourselves."

"No need," Aiko repeated. "I can tell you about it."

Friday after school Brad and I went to Aiko's house. We sat on a tatami mat in her living room, sipping guava juice, while Aiko showed us her family picture album.

"That one," she said, pointing to a photo of a middle-aged Japanese man, "that was the picture my great-grandfather sent home to his mother. He had come to Hawaii with other men to earn money working in the cane fields. After many years here he got lonely and wanted a wife. So he sent this photo home to his mother in Japan, and asked her to find a bride for him. His mother searched very hard, until she found just the right person for her son. She sent him this picture of the girl."

On the next page we saw a photograph of a gracious young woman, dressed in a flowing kimono.

I asked, "Did that mean they were married—the exchange of pictures?"

"I guess it did," Aiko responded. "The girl in that photo sailed to Hawaii, and she became my great-grandmother. She and my great-grandfather worked in the cane field

where you found the magic stalk. I don't think there was much magic about their life in those days.

"Grandmother told me that when she was a little girl her parents both worked in the cane ten hours a day. The men earned $9.00 a month, and women earned $6.00. If they ate a stick of sugar cane, they were fined 25¢. They couldn't even leave the plantation without permission."

"It's hard to imagine that beautiful girl in the kimono working in the cane," I said as I stared at the photo.

"She did," Aiko said. "Then when she came home, she would heat the bath water for all the other Japanese workers. My great-grandfather built a large wooden tub outside their hut. People paid them a few cents a day to use the bath, and that way my great-grandmother was able to save a little money."

"What a life," said Brad.

"After working ten hours, and preparing the bath, she had to cook dinner for her husband and other men in the camp," Aiko continued.

"In the days of my ancestors, women weren't even allowed to cook," I said.

"You're right, Meliana," Brad said. "And my female ancestors did all the cooking. The men would not have gone near the stove."

I thought about that. Then I said, "All our ancestors were different. But in each case men and women had special things to do."

"Isn't that still true?" Aiko asked. "My mother and grandmother do all the cooking at our house."

"Mine, too," Brad said. "Except when we eat outdoors. Then Dad barbecues the hamburger."

Aiko got us more juice and some crunchy rice crackers. While we munched we talked about our parents. "My mother cooks and cleans the house and does the washing," I said. "Sometimes I help her, 'cause she also works as a secretary."

"Well, your father's a doctor," Aiko said. "He doesn't have much time to help around the house. My dad works in the state government. He doesn't have time to help at home either. Mother teaches school, you know. She's pretty busy, too."

"What about your dad?" I asked Brad. "The church is right next to your house. So he must be home a lot."

"Not very much," Brad replied. "If he's not working on his sermons, he's visiting church members, or going to meetings. Mother does all the housework. She doesn't have an outside job like your mothers. But she helps Dad a lot with the church. She directs the choir, and teaches Sunday School and leads a Bible Study group."

I said, "Even today, there are certain things women do and certain things men do. But times have changed . . . "

"And are still changing," Aiko interrupted. "Women today are police officers, lawyers, engineers, and things our mothers probably never thought about."

"Some women do those things," I said, "but really not very many. And some men help with housework. Like once in awhile my Dad does the laundry. But I wonder what it will be like when we grow up."

"Or even later," Brad said. "What will women and men be doing when our grandchildren are grown up?"

"There's one way to find out," I said. I grinned at my two friends sitting on the floor—Aiko with her jet black straight hair and Brad with his blond curls.

Brad caught my eye and grinned back. "You mean . . . ?"

"Yes, that's what I mean."

"Why not? How about tomorrow morning?"

Aiko looked puzzled. "What are you two talking about?"

"We're going to find out what life will be like in the future."

"And just how do you suggest we do that, Meliana?"

"The cane, Aiko—the magic sugar cane."

Aiko's black eyes widened. "Do you think we should?"

"Of course we should," Brad said. "We have this great chance."

"All we have to do is think hard, really concentrate on the future," I said.

"But what if we don't end up in the same place?" Aiko wanted to know.

"We probably won't," I said. "But we'll end up in the same time zone, and I have a feeling that in some way our lives will come together. Let's meet at the cane field tomorrow morning."

"I'll be there," Brad said.

Aiko looked scared.

In a way I was scared, too.

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Aiko still looked frightened when we met the next morning.

"I don't know if we should do this," she said. "It's sort of scary."

"Not at all," Brad said. "We know the magic just lasts a few minutes. Then it wears off. What can happen?"

"Nothing can happen," I said. My voice showed more confidence than I felt. "We each concentrate on what we'd like to be when we grow up. We have to tell the truth. No kidding around."

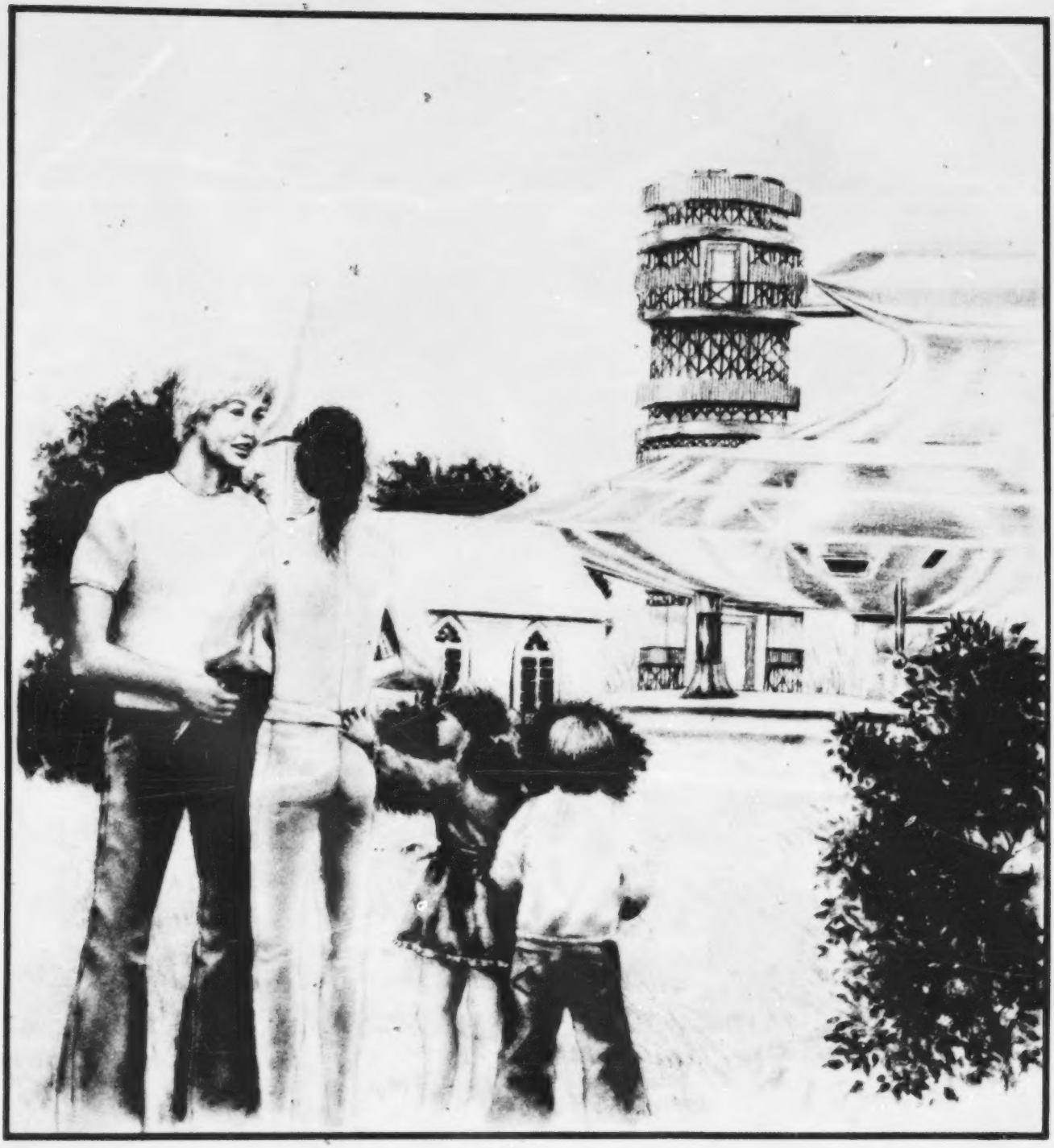
"You're right, Meliana," Brad said. "Dad wants me to be a minister—it kind of runs in the family. But you know what I really want to do? I want to be a farmer. Not a cane farmer particularly. I want to raise vegetables. I'd like to figure out ways to grow more food all over the Islands."

"O.K. Concentrate on that," I told him. "I'm going to concentrate on outer space. What about you, Aiko?"

Aiko looked out across the cane field to the ocean that she loves. She said, "I guess I'd really like to work in an underwater lab and spend all day scuba diving and studying sea life."

"Then it looks like we're all set," I said cutting cane for each of us. I cut larger pieces than I had before. "Now we have to start chewing at the same time, and concentrate—concentrate."

As I raised my cane to my lips I thought about pictures I'd seen of space ships. I'd like my space ship to be moon-shaped, with windows all around so I could see in every direction. It will have to be a two-stage rocket. When I'm ready to come back to earth, I can



slip into the nose cone. There must be a special lever in the nose cone that will separate it from the mother ship. Of course, I'll need a space band radio and special radar equipment, so I can keep in touch with Brad and Aiko.

"Looks like you're almost ready for count down," Brad's voice breaks into my thoughts. I look up at him.

What a surprise!

Brad is standing next to a moon-shaped rocket! I was thinking so hard about my space ship I forgot to watch the cane field. The cane is still there, but it's in the hills above us. Brad, Aiko, and I are standing next to the launching pad which has been built on the church grounds. But we're not kids anymore. All three of us are grown up.

"Be sure to check out your radar equipment," Brad tells me.

"It's been taken care of," I say. "Last night I told Pam and Kimo to check out all the equipment on the space ship. They're the best rocket engineers in Hawaii."

"Good," Brad says. "You might need to contact Aiko when she's under the sea."

Aiko wears a special radar bracelet. I can signal her from the space ship, and she can tap signals on the bracelet which I can pick up on my radar bracelet and on the radar screen inside the rocket.

Aiko is dressed in her wet suit with an air tank on her back. She's commander of Sea Probe, an undersea laboratory. I look toward the reef to the spot where the water changes from green to dark blue. Aiko's lab is somewhere in that area. The sea is choppy because it's a windy day, but the sky is clear.

Looking back at the space ship I see Pam and Kimo climbing onto the launching pad.

Brad squeezes my hand. "I'm really proud to have a wife who's in charge of the Weather Space Patrol for all Hawaii," he says. "Now don't worry about a thing. I'll take care of the house and children while you're gone."

"I know you will. And I'll take a look at your gardens on the Neighbor Islands."

Brad has vegetable gardens all over the state. He's experimenting with hydroponic gardening, aquaculture, and instant dehydration. He's also trying to find out which food grows best in which soil. When he's visiting his Neighbor Island farms, I take care of the children and do the housework. When I'm in outer space, he keeps things going at home. When we're both home, we share the work equally.

The children can come to either of us at any time. They help with the housework, too. They've learned how to put dirty clothes into the washing computer and turn it on. After the computer washes and dries the clothes, it puts them away in the drawers in each bedroom.

Right now the children are tugging at my space suit. They want to say goodbye. I stoop and kiss them. "Watch for me at dusk," I say. "We're scheduled to streak across the western sky at 7 p.m. just as the moon is coming up. Be good while I'm gone."

"They'll be good," Brad says. "I'll take them for a ride in my new helicopter."

Brad is so proud of his new helicopter. It can touch down on land or water. There's a radar screen on the instrument panel, so Brad and I can signal each other when I'm in my space ship. Underneath the helicopter is a special crane-like device which Brad uses to harvest his crops.

"When I get back, the children and I will help you harvest," I tell him.

We like to work together as a family. But when I'm in command of the Weather Space Patrol I must go by myself.

"I have a going-away present for you," Brad tells me.

He pulls a tiny spear out of his pocket and puts it into the palm of my hand.

Brad must be joking with me.

"What am I going to do with this—fight off mosquitoes?" I ask him.

He says, "Push that lever near the handle."

I find the lever and push it. The spear shoots out to a six-foot instrument with three sharp pointed tips at the end.

"Thanks, Brad," I say, pushing the lever again. The spear collapses to its original miniature size.

"I know you're patrolling the weather," he says. "But you should be prepared for any type of danger."

Pam and Kimo are signaling to me. The countdown is beginning. I climb onto the launching pad and step into the elevator. I push the button that says "top." In half a minute I'm inside the rocket.

"Prepare for lift-off," I command.

The take-off is smooth and fast. Within seconds we are orbiting the earth. "Keep on this orbit unless I tell you to change," I tell my crew. "I want to circle the world a few times and look things over. Kimo, hook up my super-eye telescope."

The super-eye telescope was my invention. It's about the size of a stick of sugar cane. When I hold one end up to my eye and place the other end against the window of the rocket, I can see details just as though I were only a few hundred feet above the earth.

We're speeding over Hawaii right now. I'll take a look at Brad's plantations on the Neighbor Islands.

The plantations look good.

I speak into the space-band radio strapped to my wrist.

"Brad - 22 - Hawaii. Brad - 22 - Hawaii. Do you read me?"

The answer comes instantly. "This is Brad - 22 - Hawaii. I read you loud and clear.

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How's it going?"

"Your plantations are in good shape. The coffee beans on Kona are nearly ripe. Artichokes and potatoes on Molokai look healthy. Your carrots on Maui are about ready to harvest."

"Sounds good, Meliana. All is well here. Over and out."

We circle the earth. I'm on watch for changes in the weather. The Mainland United States is almost overflowing with high-rise buildings. It's a good thing Hawaii, under Brad's direction, grows so much food. We can feed everyone on the Islands and still have enough left over to ship to the Mainland.

We fly over Europe and Asia. Now we're looking down on Hawaii again.

I adjust the radar, trying to contact Aiko.

Aiko and I have figured out a radar code so we can communicate with signals. Now I pick up her signals on the screen. Yes, she's reading me.

She tells me she's going to dive quite deep. I know she's investigating some rare shells she found under the reef. Aiko asks me to let her know of any changes in the weather.

By this time we are streaking over Africa. I scan both ends of the earth. All seems quiet on the weather front. I take a careful reading of the instrument panel on my dashboard. Pressure, tides, currents, clouds, temperature. All is well.

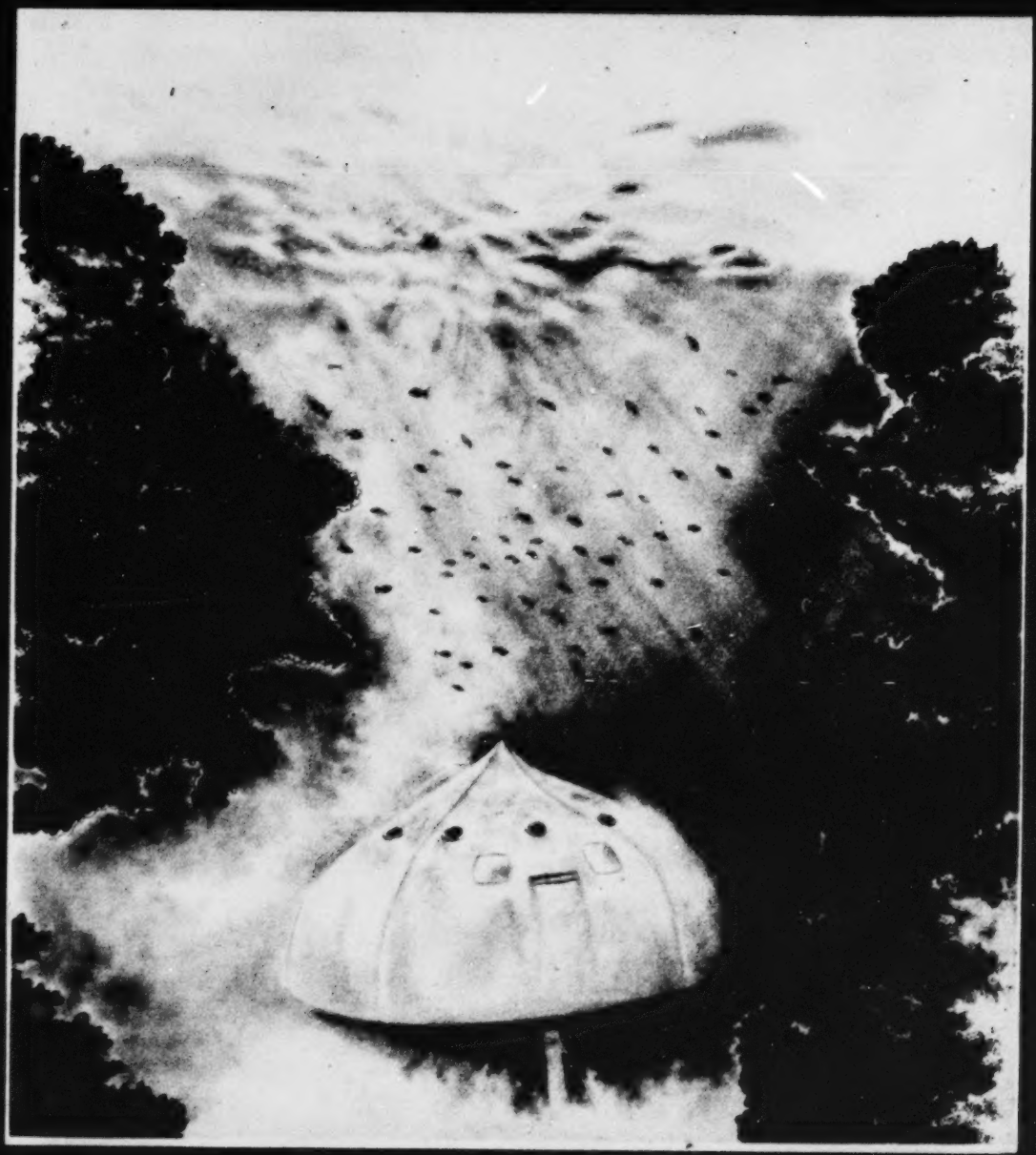
But wait!

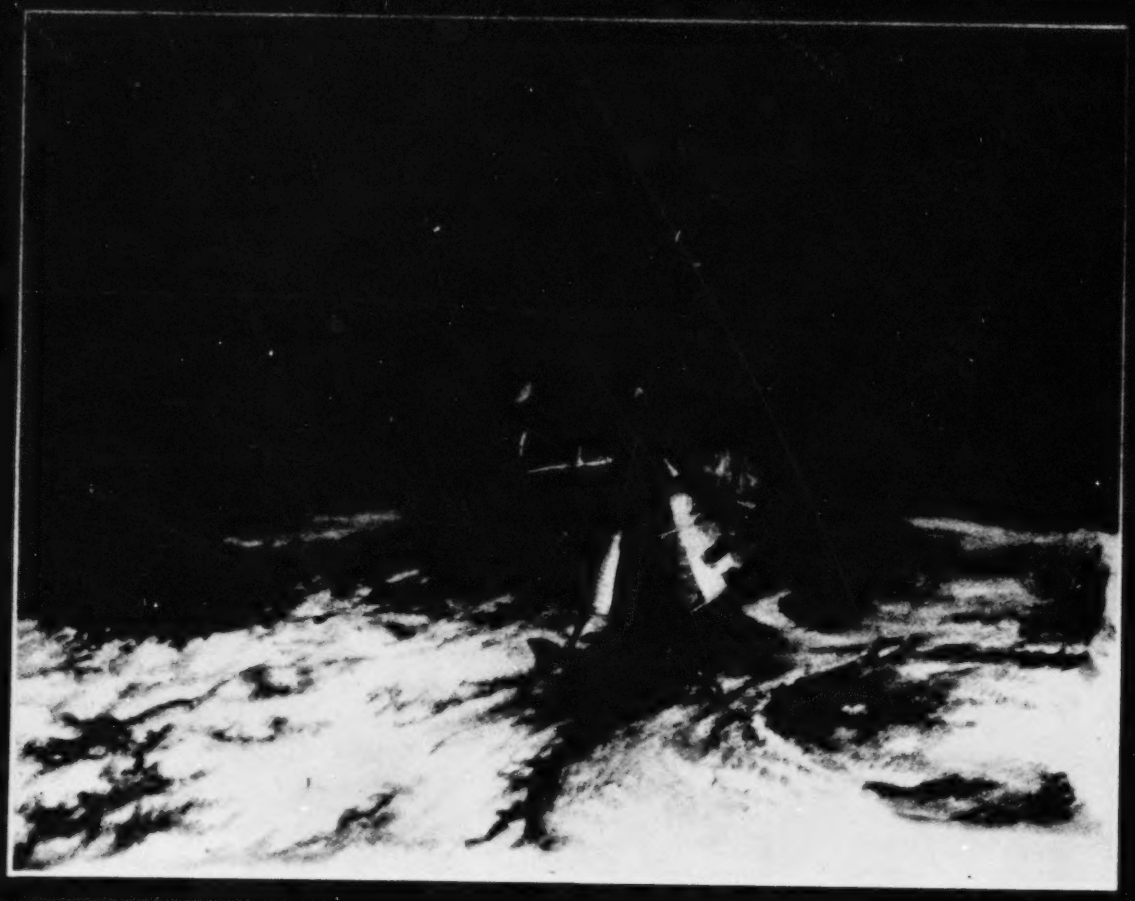
The needle on the seismic pressure gauge is wavering. It's quivering over the high pressure end of the counter.

"Stand by for further orders," I tell Pam and Kimo. "I think there's pressure building up somewhere beneath the ocean. It may generate a tidal wave."

We slow the ship and change course. Again we skim over America, Europe and Asia. This time I'm checking ocean currents and swells. There it is. Near the Kuril Islands north of Japan.

Soon there will be a major tidal wave, and it's heading toward Hawaii!





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I must send warning!

I contact Janet Wong, who's in charge of satellite control.

"Weather space ship to satellite control. Vigorous wave action near Kuril Islands. Severe tidal wave anticipated within one hour. Warn all earth stations."

Janet's voice comes over the space-band radio. "Warning received," she responds. "We'll notify all major centers, so they can start protecting their lands."

Pacific seas are rising. The tidal wave is moving rapidly.

I must warn Aiko to get back to the sea lab.

I signal her with my radar bracelet.

There is no reply.

Sometimes Aiko gets so busy studying sea life she ignores her radar bracelet.

"We'd better swing by Oahu so I can make closer contact," I tell my crew. Pam steers the space ship toward Oahu. Peering through my telescope I focus on the undersea lab. I search all around the reef.

I do not see Aiko. Of course, if she's deep under the ocean I won't be able to see her.

I signal again.

Again there is no answer.

Seas are choppy. Foam swirls on top of heavy swells. I check underwater currents on my instrument panel. The currents around Oahu are pulling and churning. They are growing stronger every minute.

Where is Aiko?

I take another reading of my instrument panel. The tidal wave is moving closer to Hawaii. The ocean around Oahu is rising.

I know the undertow near the reef can be dangerous in rough weather. What if Aiko should be carried away by a riptide?

Soon the monstrous wave will pull the water back from shore. Aiko might get caught in the strong current. Once again I send radar signals to my friend.

Still there is no answer.

The water is backing up now, pulling away from Oahu. It's rushing out, swishing, swirling, rushing out to the ocean beyond. Water is sucked farther and farther back into the ocean, leaving a vast stretch of sand.

Now the undersea lab is exposed on the dry floor of the ocean. I put my telescope to my eye and scout the lab.

I don't see Aiko anywhere.

We watch the giant wave tumbling toward the Islands. It pushes landward with mighty force. Mountains of water pour onto Oahu. Water roars past the church, almost reaching to the steeple. It surges inland covering the cane fields.

By the time we make our next pass over Hawaii, all the tossing churning water is pouring out to sea again. I check my instrument panel. There is only one wave. There will not be another.

Suddenly a bleep appears on the radar screen. I peer intently at the signal. It's Aiko.

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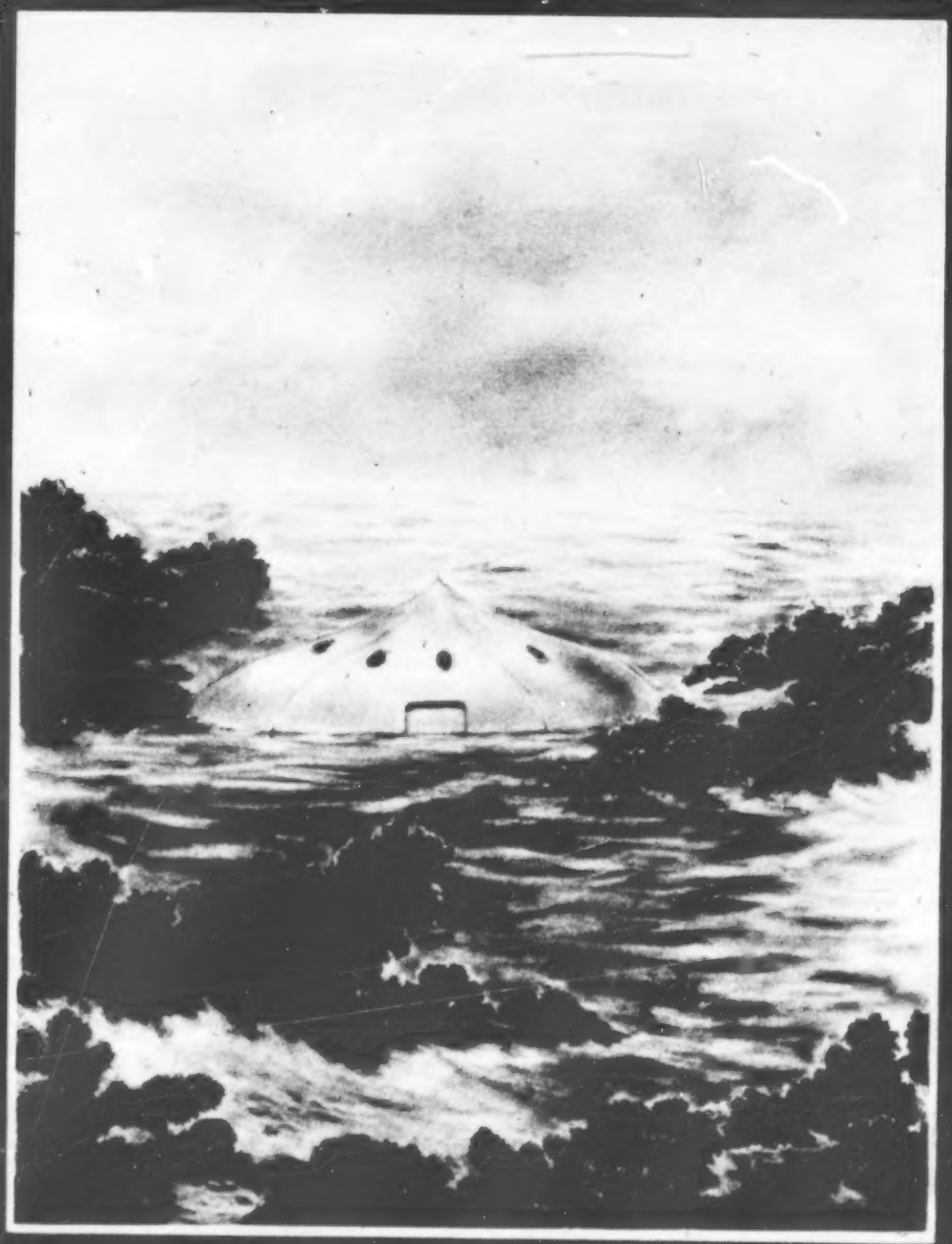

She's signaling for help!

Our code for help is three quick taps on the radar bracelet. The signals appear weak and far away. The first one comes as we pass over Hawaii. By the time the second signal reaches us we are above the U.S. Mainland. Over the Atlantic Ocean we receive the third part of the code. This one is so weak it shows up as a mere dot on the radar screen.

I turn to my crew.

"Pam, prepare the nose cone for reentry," I command. "We must rescue a scuba diver."

"Kimo, get me two scuba tanks, a diving mask, a pair of fins and a two-hose regulator."

I must figure out exactly where Aiko is. I feed information into the computer. I tell the computer our locations at the times we heard the three signals. To this I add the speed of our space ship and our elevation above the earth. I do some quick mathematics in my head, and feed more information into the computer.

In a moment the answer comes back.

"Aiko is under the reef, about fifty feet from the undersea lab," I tell my crew. "Touch down as near that point as you can."

We all climb into the nose cone. Kimo brings the scuba gear. I pull the lever which separates the nose cone from the mother ship. We plunge to earth!

Our reentry is smooth.

We land near the island of Oahu. The nose cone floats gently on the water.

"Steer the nose cone until it is directly over the reef," I command.

Pam steers a straight course across the water. In a moment we're hovering above the reef. We can anchor the nose cone like a boat.

I contact Brad on my space band radio.

"Aiko's in trouble," I tell him.

"Sorry to hear that," he says. "What can I do to help?"

"You'd better stand by, ready to send your helicopter if we need it," I reply.

"I'll have it ready," he says. "Everything's fine here. Thanks to your early warning, all the beaches were cleared. No one was hurt by the tidal wave."

That's good news. Now if I can just get to Aiko in time.

Kimo helps me fasten the two tanks to my back. My space suit will serve equally well as a wet suit. I step into the fins. Before putting the regulator in my mouth, I tell Kimo and Pam "Watch for signals on your radar bracelets. I'll contact you when I need help."

I push open the door of the hatch and swim out. I have calculated Aiko's location at about thirty feet beneath the reef. With long strokes I move toward that spot.

I dive. Deeper and deeper I swim.

Suddenly I spot Aiko. She's lying outside the reef with her head against a large piece of coral. She seems to have lost consciousness.

In an instant I'm beside her. I check the gauge on her tank. It's down to 400 p.s.i. That means she's almost out of air. A few more minutes and I would have been too late.

Quickly I replace her tank with one of the two on my back. As soon as this is done I try to revive her. I massage her heart. She begins to breathe normally. Slowly she regains consciousness. She looks up at me smiling gratefully through her face mask. But she does not move.

I dive beneath her. Now I see why she can't move. Her leg is stuck in a hole between two giant rocks. The suction from the receding tidal wave must have pulled her foot into that

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hole. Then when the wave shifted and rolled landward, the giant force caused her to hit her head against the coral.

I examine the rocks that trap her legs. No person alive is strong enough to move those rocks. I must contact Brad for help.

I tap signals on my radar bracelet.

"Need helicopter immediately," I tell him in code. "Get Keani Hoomalu. She's the best helicopter pilot on Oahu. Tell her to land next to nose cone and to send down a rescue chair. Instruct Theresa Villanueva to dive down and pry Aiko's foot loose."

Theresa's the top ocean engineer in Hawaii. She'll know how to free Aiko's foot.

I send signals up to Kimo and Pam telling them to watch for the helicopter. I point to the surface to show Aiko that help is coming.

Aiko's face has turned pale. She looks frightened.

She points to a rock near my feet.

A large black eel wriggles and snakes around the rock. It is twisting and writhing.

In a flash I remember the folding spear Brad gave me. I pull it from the pocket of my space suit and push the button. The spear extends to six feet. There are three sharp points at the tip.

With that spear I keep the eel at bay.

I'm picking up signals from my radar bracelet. Keani Hoomalu is telling me the helicopter is above us. She's lowering a rescue chair on a long cable.

In a moment we see the cable. Theresa Villanueva, in her diving outfit, is being lowered along with the cable. She's coming closer.

So is the eel!

I thrust my spear toward the eel. It swims away. But not too far away. I keep waving the spear. The eel is still swimming nearby. If only I can hold it off until the cable reaches us.

There is a loud clang as the rescue chair hits the coral. Holding the spear in one hand, I support Aiko with the other. Theresa understands the problem immediately. She pulls a laser drill from a belt at her side and drills through the rocks. In a short time she separates the two rocks. Aiko's foot is free! Gently Theresa and I help Aiko into the rescue chair.

The eel wriggles near our feet. I swing my spear toward it. It swims farther away.

Theresa and I hold onto the cable. We signal to the helicopter that we're ready to come up.

Slowly we're pulled to the surface. The rescue chair is now beside the helicopter. Keani Hoomalu helps Aiko climb inside the helicopter. Theresa and I follow Aiko. We remove our tanks and face masks.

Aiko smiles at me. "Meliana, you saved my life," she says. "How can I ever thank you?"

"Theresa and Keani helped," I say. "So did Brad, Kimo, and Pam. We all worked together. But don't worry about thanks. What are friends for if not to help each other?"

The helicopter lands on the ground. We open the door. Brad is there waiting. He helps us climb out. "What an adventure," he says hugging me. "I've brought a doctor to examine Aiko's leg."

Dr. Louise Pacheco probes the tender areas gently with her skillful hands. "It's not broken," she tells Aiko. "Only badly bruised and sprained. It'll be sore for a few days, but you'll be all right."

"You two sit here and rest," Brad says after the doctor leaves. "Let me bring you some sugar cane."

He brings us each a piece of cane and sits beside us on the ground. The cane is sticky and sweet. But it tastes different from the cane we were chewing earlier.

As I chew, I think about my rocket crew. I haven't told Kimo what to do with the nose cone. I'll give him orders over the space band radio.

The radio is not on my wrist!

Perhaps it fell off when I was climbing into the helicopter.

I look for the helicopter, but don't see it. I stand up and peer beyond the church steeple, out to the sea. I can't see the nose cone. The undersea lab is not near the reef. There is no launching pad next to the church.

I look at my two best friends. Aiko is not in her wet suit, and I'm no longer wearing my space suit. We're all in shorts and T-shirts. There is nothing but sugar cane all around us.

Birds chirp in the cane field. The sun is sinking low in the ocean, sending streaks of silver across the water. Brad and Aiko are smiling at me.

"Brad," I say, "this cane doesn't taste quite like the cane we were chewing this morning. Did you get it from the magic stalk?"

"Meliana, I can't find the magic stalk," he replies.

"But it's right here." I walk over to the spot where I cut my cane this morning. I look for my red scarf. The scarf isn't there.

"It was very windy this morning," Brad says. "Perhaps the scarf blew away."

"Perhaps," I say.

To myself I think perhaps it was all pretend after all.

We walk silently out of the cane field. We move rather slowly, as we must wait for Aiko. She can't walk very fast, because her leg is so sore.

GLOSSARY

hālau wa'a — a long house for canoes with openings on both ends

haole — white person; formerly any foreigner

heiau — pre-Christian Hawaiian place of worship

kapa — tapa, as made from the bark of the paper mulberry tree

kapu — taboo; prohibited, forbidden; sacred, holy

kaulua — name of a season

kūmū — goatfish

lauhala — pandanus leaf, especially as used in plaiting

nana — name of a season

saimin -- term used in Hawaii to denote soup made with Japanese noodles

ulua — certain species of crevalle or jack, an important game fish and food item

wauke — the paper mulberry; the bark was made into tough tapa used for clothing, bed clothes